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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/681,648	05/16/2001	Shing-Ming Chen		2188
27609	7590	08/24/2004	EXAMINER	
SHING-MING CHEN				STORK, KYLE R
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CANADA				
				ART UNIT
				PAPER NUMBER
				2178

DATE MAILED: 08/24/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/681,648	CHEN, SHING-MING
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Kyle R Stork	2178

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on May 16, 2001.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-3 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 3 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. This office action is in response to the application filed May 16, 2001.
2. Claims 1-3 are pending. Claim 1 is an independent claim.

Specification

3. Applicant is reminded of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure.

The abstract submitted by the applicant is too long.

The abstract should be in narrative form and generally limited to a single paragraph on a separate sheet within the range of 50 to 150 words. It is important that the abstract not exceed 150 words in length since the space provided for the abstract on the computer tape used by the printer is limited. The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided. The abstract should describe the disclosure sufficiently to assist readers in deciding whether there is a need for consulting the full patent text for details.

The language should be clear and concise and should not repeat information given in the title. It should avoid using phrases which can be implied, such as, "The disclosure concerns," "The disclosure defined by this invention," "The disclosure describes," etc.

4. The title of the invention is objected to for not being descriptive. The suggested new title is "Method and System for Automated Data Manipulation in an Electronic Spreadsheet Using a Cell Collection Expression".

5. Claim 3 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim should refer to other claims in the alternate only. See MPEP § 608.01(n). Accordingly, the claim has not been further treated on the merits.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

6. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Section 2106 of the MPEP states:

(a) Functional Descriptive Material: "Data Structures" Representing Descriptive Material Per Se or Computer Programs Representing Computer Listings Per Se
Data structures not claimed as embodied in computer-readable media are descriptive material per se and are not statutory because they are not capable of causing functional change in the computer. See, e.g., Warmerdam, 33 F.3d at 1361, 31 USPQ2d at 1760 (claim to a data structure per se held nonstatutory). Such claimed data structures do not define any structural and functional interrelationships between the data structure and other claimed aspects of the invention which permit the data structure's functionality to be realized. In contrast, a claimed computer-readable medium encoded with a data structure defines structural and functional interrelationships between the data structure and the computer software and hardware components which permit the data structure's functionality to be realized, and is thus statutory.

Similarly, computer programs claimed as computer listings per se, i.e., the descriptions or expressions of the programs, are not physical "things." They are neither computer components nor statutory processes, as they are not "acts" being performed. Such claimed computer programs do not define any structural and functional interrelationships between the computer program and other claimed elements of a computer which permit the computer program's functionality to be realized. In contrast, a claimed computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program is a computer element which defines structural and functional interrelationships between the computer program and the rest of the computer which permit the computer program's functionality to be realized, and is thus statutory. Accordingly, it is important to distinguish claims that define descriptive material per se from claims that define statutory inventions.

Computer programs are often recited as part of a claim. Office personnel should determine whether the computer program is being claimed as part of an otherwise statutory manufacture or machine. In such a case, the claim remains statutory irrespective of the fact that a computer program is included in the claim. The same result occurs when a computer program is used in a computerized process where the computer executes the instructions set forth in the computer program. Only when the claimed invention taken as a whole is directed to a mere program listing, i.e., to only its description or expression, is it descriptive material per se and hence nonstatutory.

7. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

As per independent claim 1 "a computer spreadsheet application method" is disclosed. This is non-statutory under 35 U.S.C. 101 because such claimed data structures do not define any structural and functional interrelationships between the data structure and other claimed aspects of the invention which

permit the data structure's functionality to be realized as designated by the MPEP.

As per dependent claim 2 "a computer spreadsheet application method" is disclosed. This is non-statutory under 35 U.S.C. 101 because such claimed data structures do not define any structural and functional interrelationships between the data structure and other claimed aspects of the invention which permit the data structure's functionality to be realized as designated by the MPEP.

As per dependent claim 3 "a computer spreadsheet application method" is disclosed. This is non-statutory under 35 U.S.C. 101 because such claimed data structures do not define any structural and functional interrelationships between the data structure and other claimed aspects of the invention which permit the data structure's functionality to be realized as designated by the MPEP.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

8. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

9. Claim 1 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Michelman et al. (U.S. 5987481).

As per independent claim 1 Michelman discloses a computer spreadsheet application method comprising of a key identifier to organize and separate a database into several manageable data sets, which have a similar data construct

(column 7, line 63- column 8, line 5: This section gives the makeup of the key identifier; column 8, lines 63-65: This section uses the key identifier "E4" to identify a data set).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. Claim 2 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Michelman and further in view of Bruffey et al. (U.S. 4,945,475).

As per dependent claim 2 Michelman discloses the limitations similar to those in claim 1, and the same rejection is incorporated herein. Michelman also discloses a region identifier to specify regions containing the Key-ID in a single spreadsheet or plurality of spreadsheets (column 9, lines 56-57: A label is a region identifier and a range is the specified region) and where, the region of interest is defined using the Row or Column Identifier (column 9, third table from the top: Here labels are listed on the left side and label set is listed on the right in the Row or Column Identifier format) and the optional identifier- Sheet identifier (column 2, lines 22-26). Michelman fails to disclose a file identifier and a directory identifier. However, Bruffey discloses a file identifier (column 6, line 66- column 7, line 1) and a directory identifier (column 6, lines 18-20).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to have combined Michelman's method for identifying spreadsheets and regions within spreadsheets with Bruffey's method of assigning directory and file identifiers to each file, since it would have allowed a user to have more layers to specify exactly which regions he or she wished.

Conclusion

12. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Balbine et al. (US 5937406): Discloses a database and file and directory identifiers.
- Yasunaga (US 5737556): Discloses a document management system with a database.
- MacGregor et al. (US 5396621): Discloses key identifiers and documents.
- Lowry et al. (US 6549878): Discloses a spreadsheet with key identifiers and documents.
- Pratley et al. (US 2001/0049699): Discloses a method for merging cells and key identifiers.
- Edelman (US 6292809): Discloses a method for identifying a region and key identifiers.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kyle R Stork whose telephone number is

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(703) 605-1203. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (7:30-4:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stephen Hong can be reached on (703) 308-5465. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Kyle Stork
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2178



STEPHEN S. HONG
PRIMARY EXAMINER